



# Critical Insights on Maine™

*The **Voice** of Maine*



# Introduction

# Background and Methodology

## Background

- Each spring and fall, Digital Research, Inc. conducts the *Critical Insights on Maine™* tracking survey, a comprehensive, statewide public opinion poll of registered voters that covers a variety of topics of interest to businesses, government agencies, and the general public.
- *Critical Insights on Maine™* has been documenting the attitudes, perceptions, and preferences of Maine’s residents for more than 25 years, making it the longest-running consistently-administered tracking survey in the Northeast.
  - In addition to general-interest items (the results of which are released to the media in this report), the survey also includes a number of proprietary items for sponsoring entities, with results of those items released only to the sponsors of those specific questions.

## Methodology

- All survey respondents were registered voters who live in Maine.
- This wave of the survey included a total of 614 respondents across the state who were surveyed by phone (300 respondents) or online (314 respondents) in October and November of 2023.
  - Final data reflect the demographics of the state’s population and were statistically weighted to ensure that those responding by phone or the internet had an equal impact on the overall results.
  - With a total sample of 614 respondents, results presented here have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
- The entire survey took the average participant 20 minutes to complete – including both general-interest questions and proprietary subscriber items.

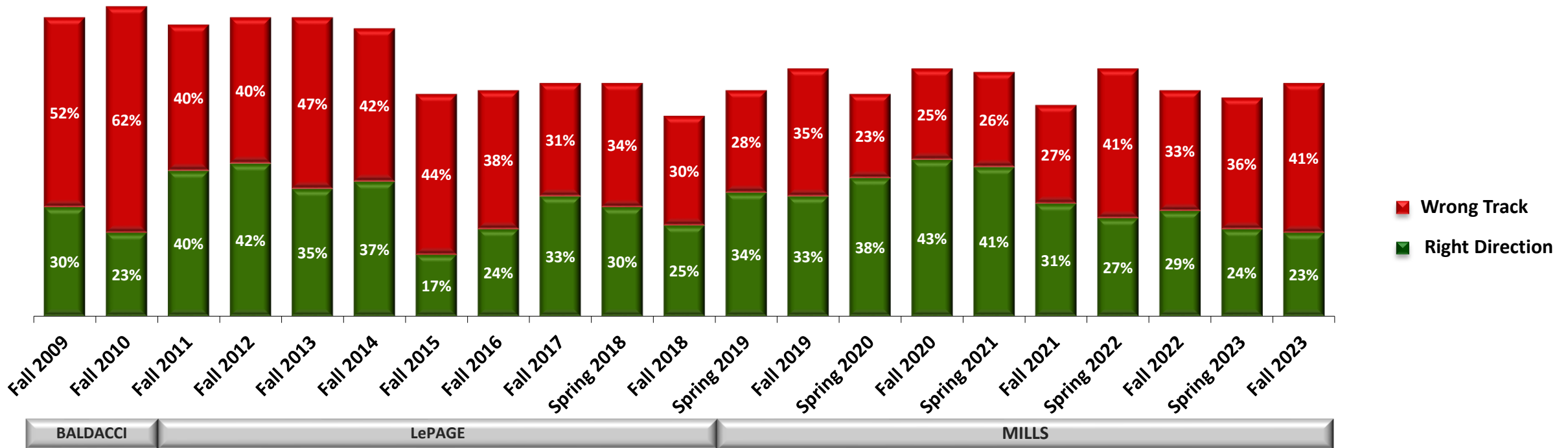
# **Views Towards the Direction of Maine and the Nation**

# One-quarter of voters surveyed in the fall of 2023 believe Maine is headed in the *right direction*, holding steady since the spring.

## Direction of Maine

Six out of ten Republicans feel the state is on the *wrong track* (62%), compared to two out of ten Democrats (22%).

Those who believe Maine is on the right track are most likely – by far – to point to the governor as the reason for their positive opinion.

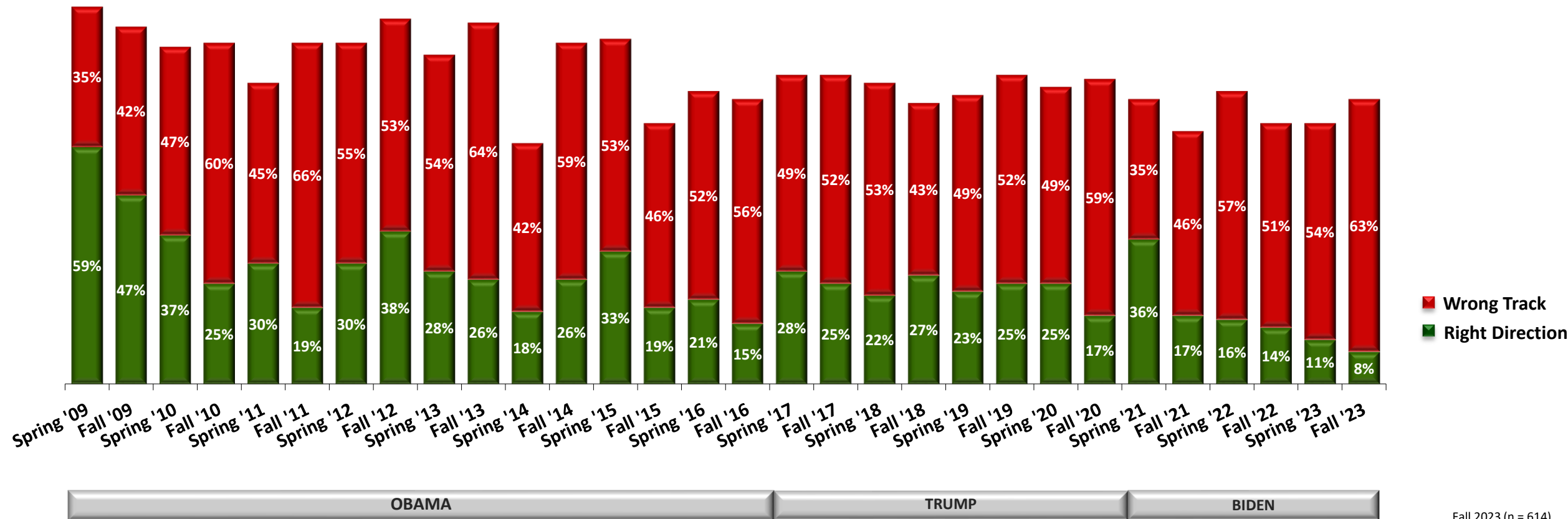


Fall 2023 (n = 614)

Well over half of surveyed voters in Maine – 63% overall – believe the nation is on the *wrong track* – a significant increase from last spring, and high above the historical average. Just one out of ten believe the nation as a whole is heading in the *right direction*.

Fully eight out of ten Republicans feel the nation is on the *wrong track* (81%), compared to three out of ten Democrats (34%).

### Direction of the Nation



OBAMA

TRUMP

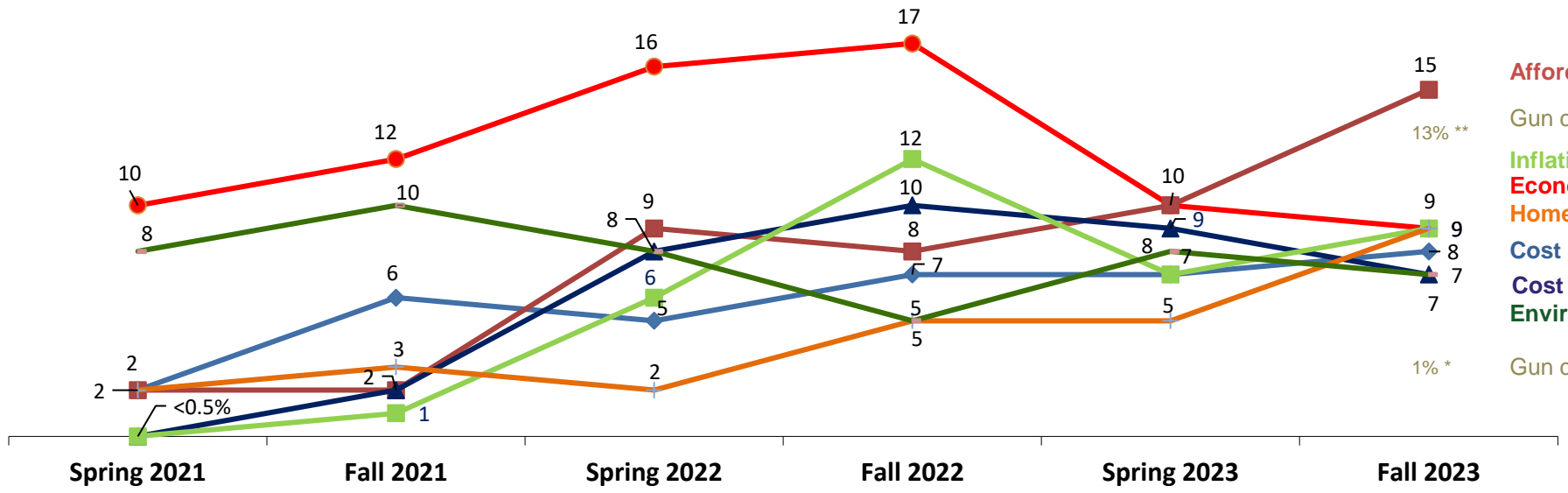
BIDEN

Fall 2023 (n = 614)

Financial and economic issues – led by housing affordability – continue to be the most common overall concerns for Mainers. Homelessness and the environment are the only non-economic concerns mentioned by a noteworthy share of surveyed voters overall.

**Most Important Issues Facing Maine**  
 Percentage naming each issue  
 (Top Mentions)

Compared to the spring, Mainers are now more likely to be concerned about affordable housing and homelessness.



- Affordable housing**
- Gun control/Gun violence (After Lewiston events)
- Inflation 9%**
- Economy 9%**
- Homelessness 9%**
- Cost of living 8%**
- Cost of energy 7%**
- Environment 7%**
- Gun control/Gun violence (Before Lewiston events)

In all, 3% of Mainers mention gun control or gun violence as a top-of-mind issue facing Maine.

- Prior to the events in Lewiston on October 25, 1% of Mainers mentioned the issue.\*
- After the events in Lewiston, 13% of Mainers mentioned gun control.\*\*

All items mentioned by more than 5% of participants in the fall of 2023 are shown.

Fall 2023 (n = 614)

When focused on economic issues specifically, the high cost of living generally continues to be the most common concern among Maine voters, followed by the price of oil and other utilities, inflation, and the cost of housing.

### Top Economic/Financial Concerns

Percentage naming each issue  
(Top Mentions)

Compared to the spring, Mainers are less likely to be concerned about inflation and the general state of the economy.

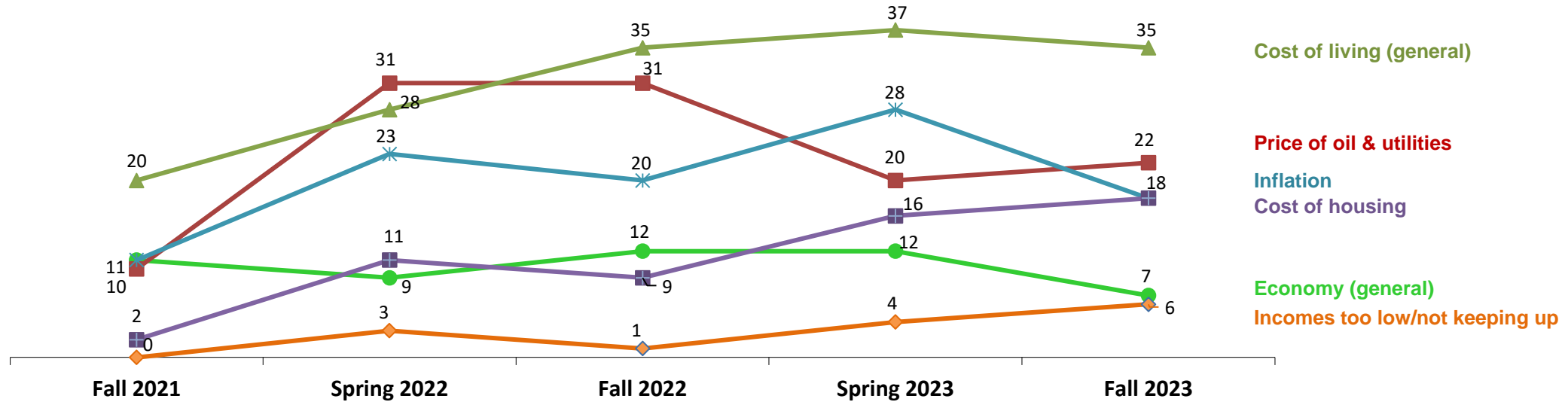


Chart shows issues mentioned by more than 5% of respondents in the fall of 2023.

Fall 2023 (n = 614)



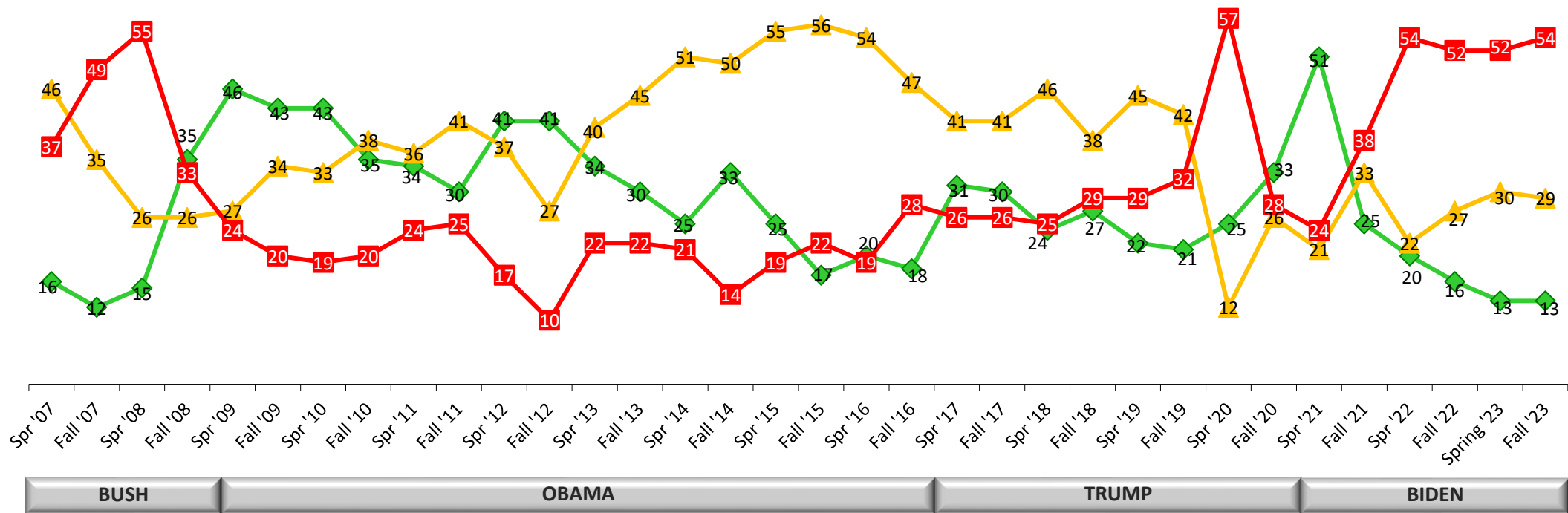
Half of Mainers believe the economy will get *worse* over the next year, maintaining a level of pessimism seen only during the great recession and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Optimism About the Economy

% predicting the economy will be:



Democrats (22%) are much more likely than Republicans (8%) to feel the economy will improve over the next 12 months.

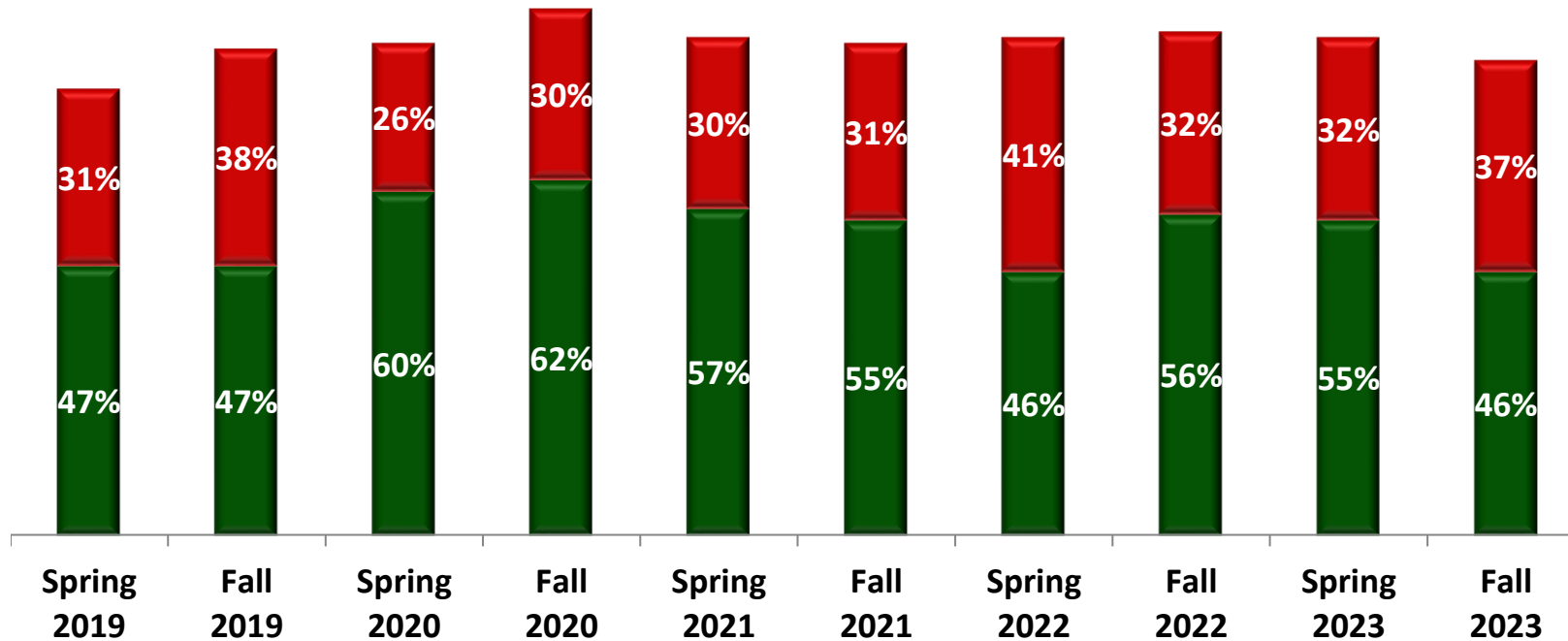


Fall 2023: (n=614)

# Opinions of Politicians

After a decline since the spring, almost half of voters currently approve of Janet Mills' performance as governor.

### Approval of Janet Mills



Nearly eight out of ten Democrats currently approve of the governor's performance (76%), compared to two out of ten Republicans (22%). The governor's approval rating fell by equal shares of Democrats and Republicans since the spring.

For comparison purposes, across Paul LePage's tenure, between 31% and 47% of Mainers approved of his performance.

Disapprove  
Approve

Fall 2023 (n=614)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Janet Mills has been handling her job as governor?

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

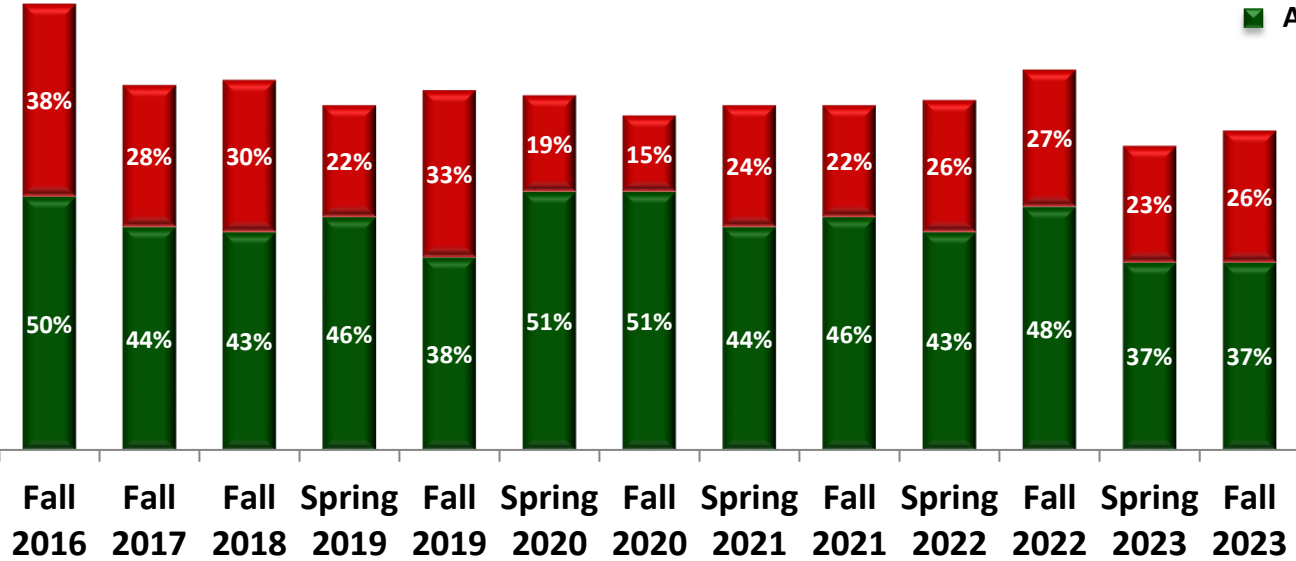
Roughly four out of ten constituents of Chellie Pingree approve of her performance – holding steady since the spring.

After a significant decline since the spring, one-quarter of Jared Golden’s constituents now approve of his performance – the lowest measured across his five years in office.

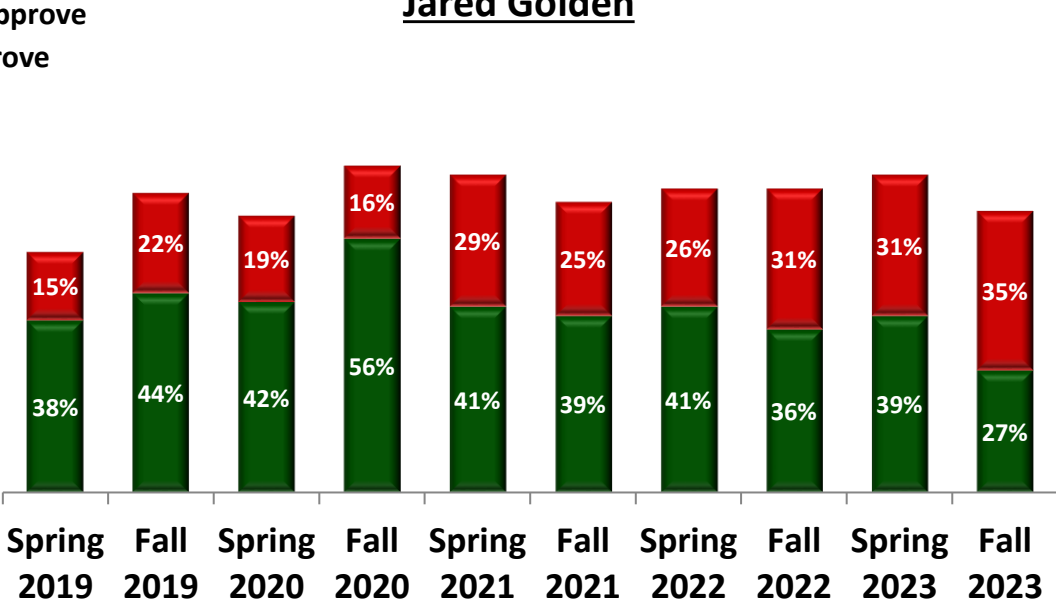
### Approval of Congressional Representatives

(Among those in the respective districts)

#### Chellie Pingree



#### Jared Golden



Six out of ten Democrats in the first congressional district approve of Chellie Pingree’s performance (59%), compared to 17% of Republicans – very consistent with last spring.

Support for Golden has declined dramatically among Democrats since the spring (falling from 63% to 34% between the spring and fall), but has held steady among Republicans (26% approved of his performance in the spring, and 24% approved in the fall).

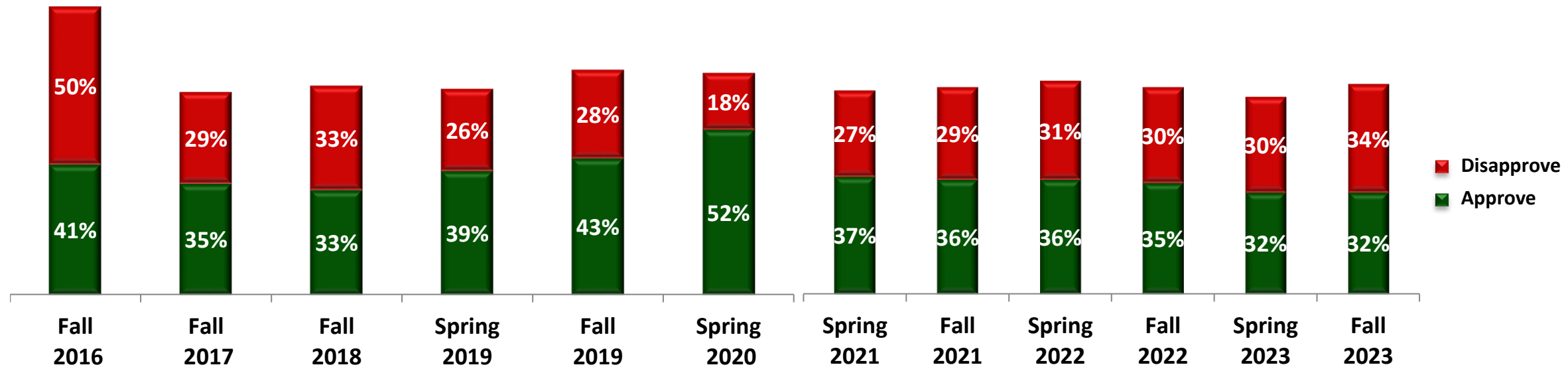
Fall 2023 (n=307)

Fall 2023 (n=307)

One-third of voters in Maine approve of the state legislature's performance, holding close to the historical average.

### Approval of the State Legislature

Just under half of Democrats in Maine approve of the legislature's performance (45%), compared to one-quarter of Republicans (26%).



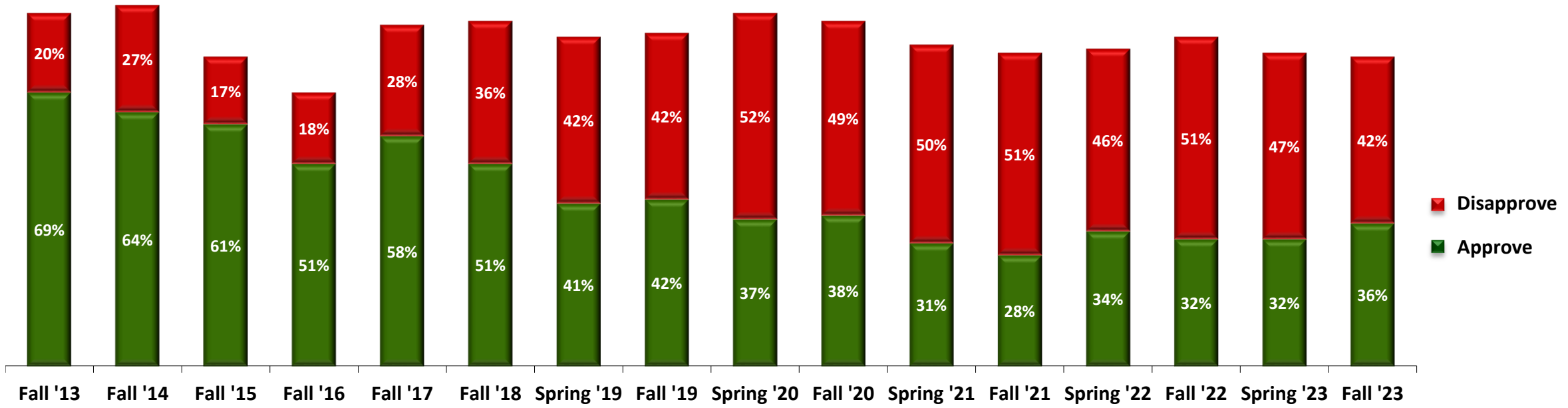
Fall 2023 (n=614)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the current Maine state legislature is doing its job?

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

Roughly one-third of voters currently approve of the way Susan Collins is handling her job as U.S. Senator – on par with her recent ratings.

### Approval of Senator Susan Collins



Fall 2023 (n=614)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Susan Collins is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

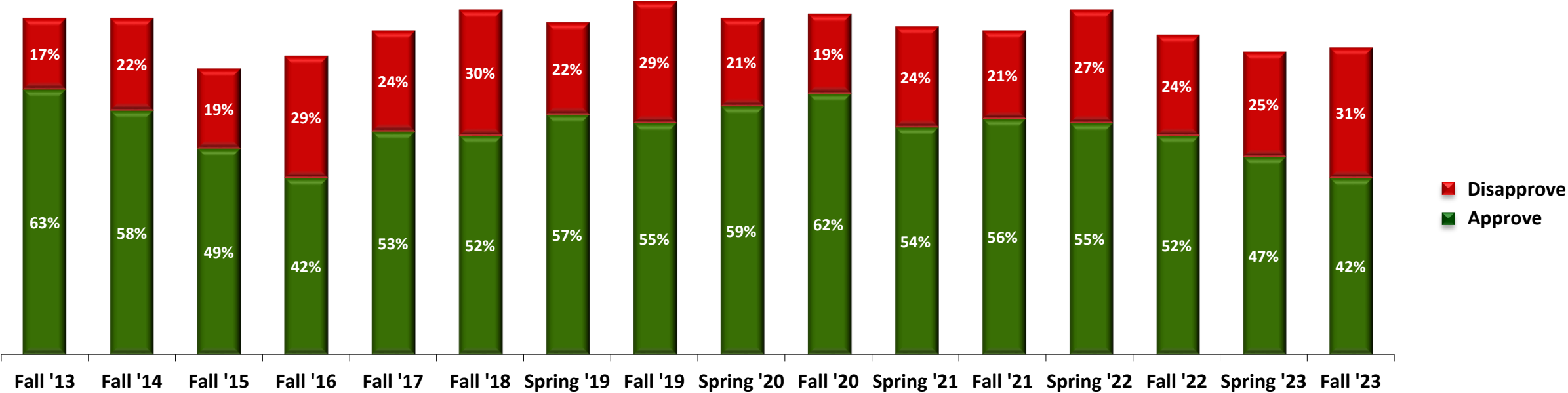
Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

Four out of ten voters approve of the job Angus King is doing as U.S. Senator, now matching the low last seen in the fall of 2016.

### Approval of Senator Angus King

The decline in Senator King’s approval rating since the fall of last year has been due to a steady erosion in support among Republicans.

% approving of King’s performance	Democrats	Republicans
Fall 2022	72%	31%
Spring 2023	74%	25%
Fall 2023	73%	19%



Fall 2023 (n=614)

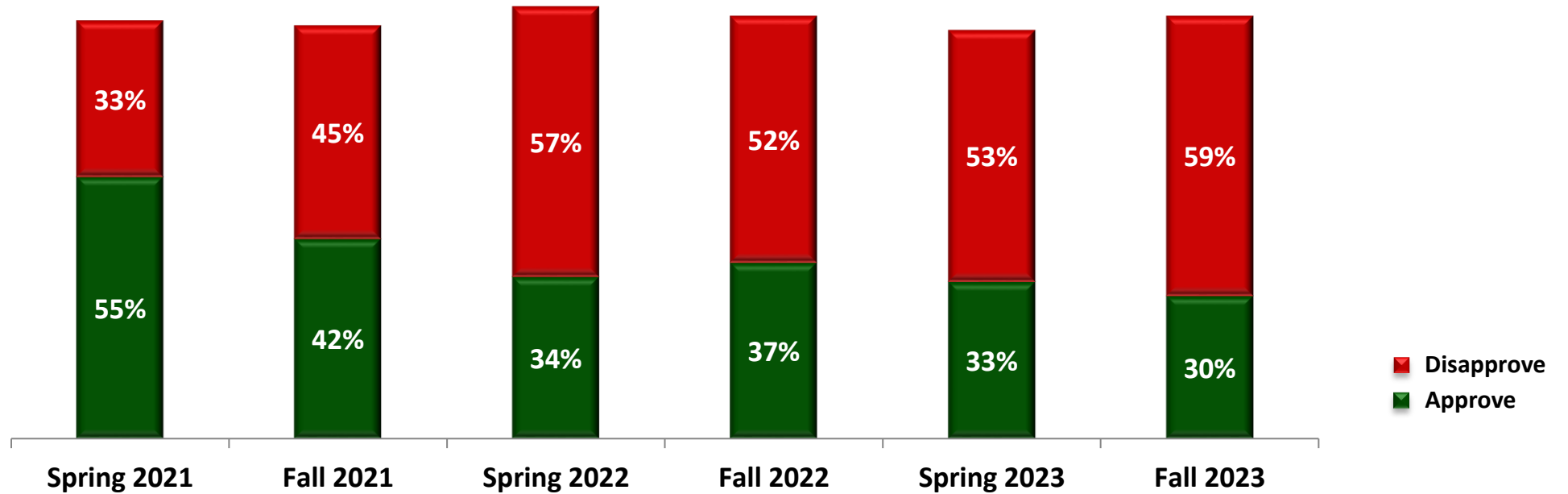
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Angus King is handling his job as U.S. Senator?

Participants could also select response options of “Not sure” and “Prefer not to say.” The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

Three out of ten voters in Maine approve of Joe Biden's performance as president. While steady, that remains at the lowest point since his election.

### Approval of Joe Biden

Just 6% of Republicans in Maine approve of Joe Biden's performance, compared to 63% of Democrats.



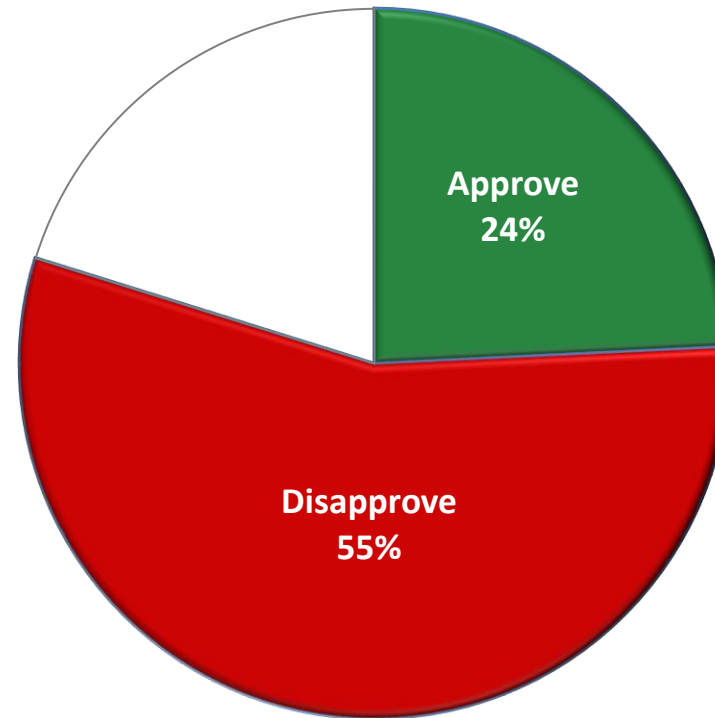
For comparison, over the course of his final two years in office, 38% of Maine voters approved of Donald Trump's performance. When asked in the fall of 2023 to look back over his term, 38% of voters approved of Trump's performance in hindsight.

Fall 2023 (n=614)



# One-quarter of voters in Maine approve of Kamala Harris's performance as vice president.

## Approval of Kamala Harris



Only 5% of Republicans in Maine approve of Kamala Harris's performance, compared to 51% of Democrats.

Fall 2023 (n=614)

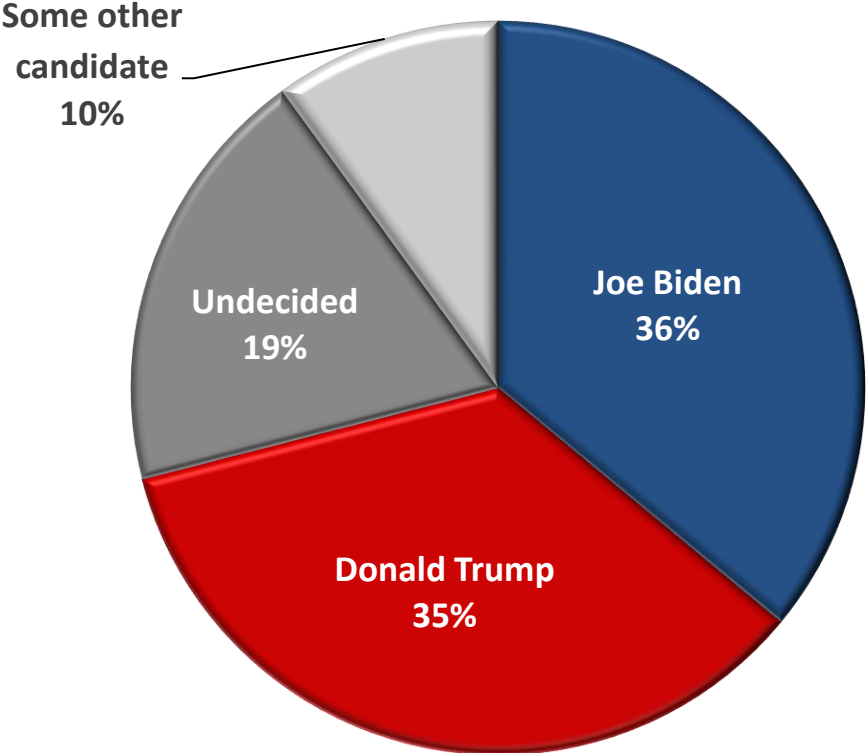
*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Kamala Harris is doing her job as Vice President?*

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

# 2024 Voting Intentions

Overall, Joe Biden and Donald Trump would receive almost identical shares of the vote in a 2024 election rematch in Maine, though many voters remain undecided.

### Trump Versus Biden Presidential Vote



Predictably, Trump is particularly strong in the second congressional district, and Biden is strongest in the first congressional district.

% likely to vote for candidate in Congressional District	Congressional District 1	Congressional District 2
<b>Biden</b>	43%	28%
<b>Trump</b>	27%	42%

Voters who do not identify with one of the two major parties are just as divided as others: 34% would vote for Trump and 25% would vote for Biden.

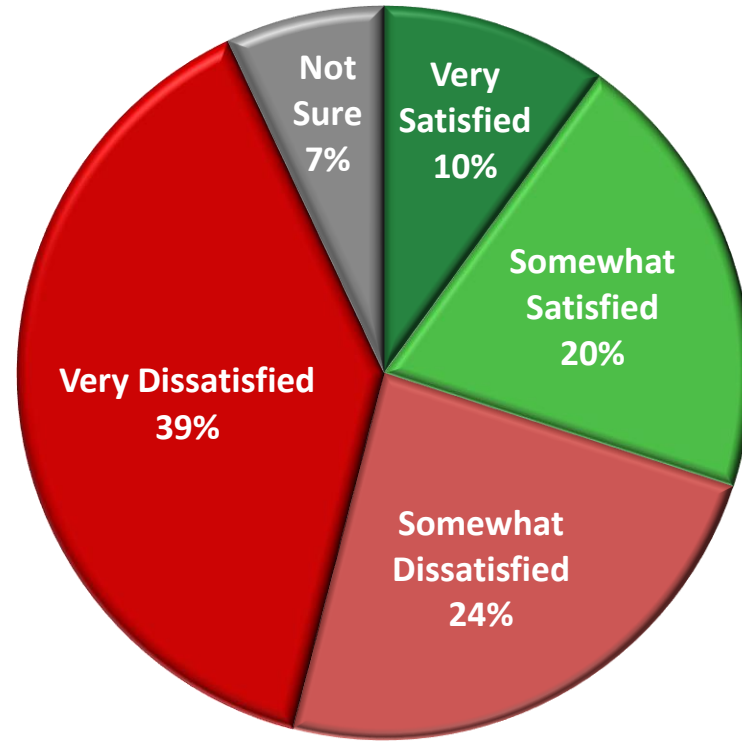
Only three out of ten voters would be satisfied with their choices if Donald Trump and Joe Biden are the parties' nominees.

### Satisfaction with Presidential Candidates

**Total dissatisfied with Biden/Trump choices:  
62%**

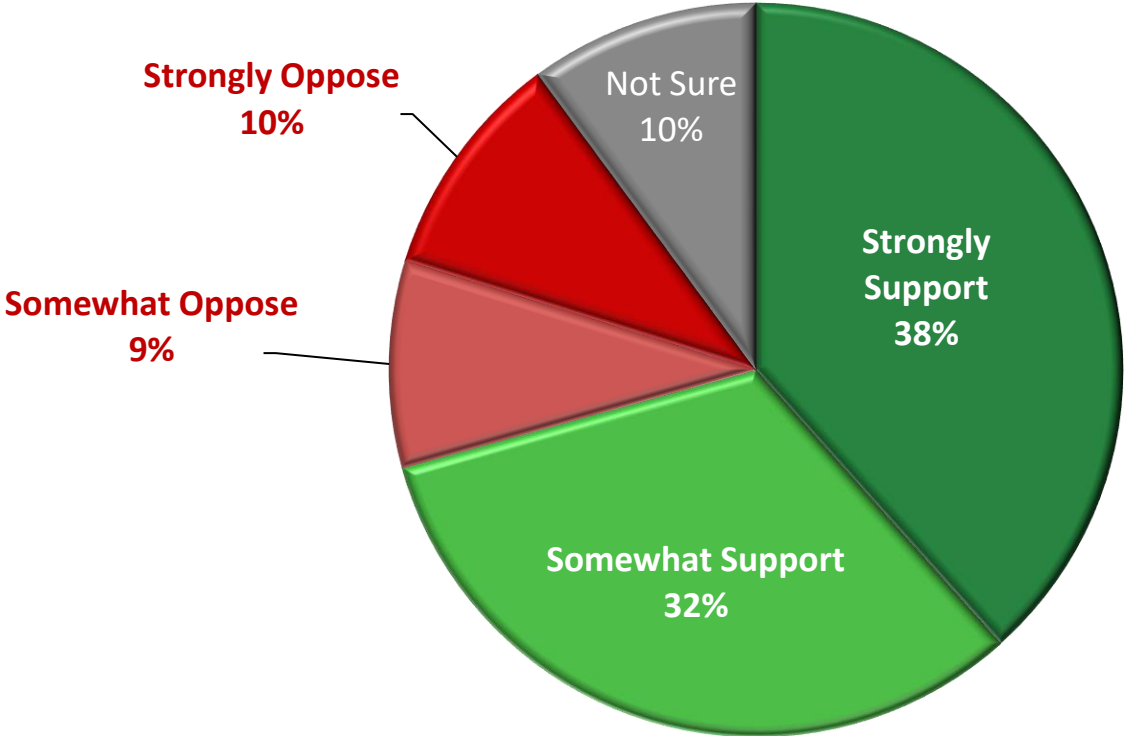
Democrats (63%) and Republicans (58%) are equally likely to be dissatisfied with their choices in a Biden/Trump rematch.

**Total satisfied with Biden/Trump choices:  
30%**



A strong majority of voters – seven out of ten overall – would support age limits for national candidates.

### Support for Age Limits for Elected Officials



**Total supporting age limits:  
70%**

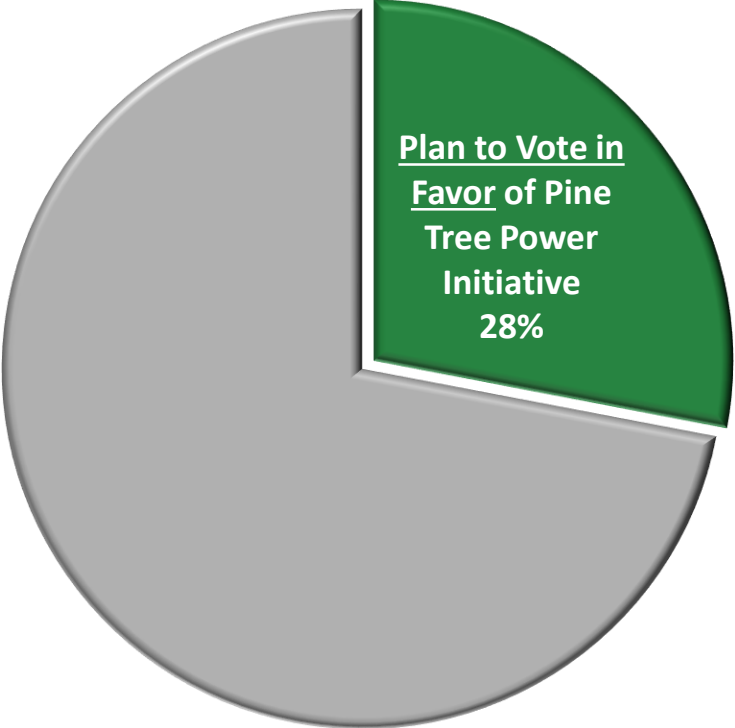
Overall support for age limits is consistently high across all age groups.

Prior to the November 2023 referendum, 28% of surveyed Mainers planned to vote in support of the Pine Tree Power initiative. That is nearly identical to the 30% of voters who actually voted in favor of the ballot question.

### Support for a Ballot Initiative “To Create the Pine Tree Power Company, a Nonprofit, Customer-owned Utility”

**REFERENDUM QUESTION:**

*“Do you want to create a new power company governed by an elected board to acquire and operate existing for-profit electricity transmission and distribution facilities in Maine?”*



In November of 2023, 30% of voters actually voted in favor of the Pine Tree Power ballot initiative.



To learn more about this survey and its findings, contact:  
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